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## **CONVERSATIONAL SKINS**

*heirloom 'pelts' that emerge and evolve*

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Design // 2016  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Fabric garments augment and transform the body as a second skin. This project is a poetic, heuristic inquiry that investigates taking this 'second skin' through multiple forms, transitioning between flat fabric, garment form, flat fabric, garment form etc. In this cyclical long-term relationship, the surface of the textile-skin is inscribed and augmented as cuts are made, and 'healed' through various textile processes. The scars write a story on the surface. There is a ceremonial sensation to removing and the 'flattening' the skin, which evokes the collection of a pelt. Using a phenomenological methodology the 'flat' and 'form' iterations are performed and photographed, growing a catalogue of the fabric's evolution.

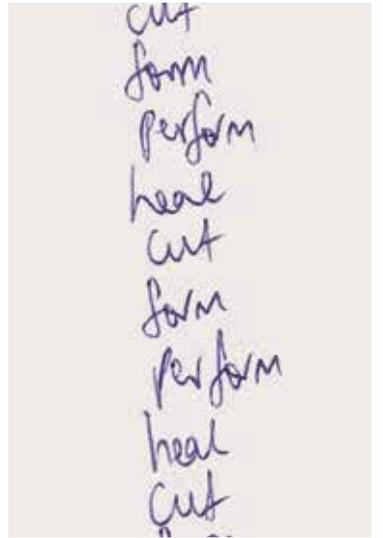
Returning a garment to 'flat' offers erasure of form; it can become a level plane for a new construction. This action is achieved by utilising the method of 'zero waste' design, in which no fabric is removed in the construction of a garment. This enables the form to be unpicked, reassembled and sewn back to a flat-fabric state. The flat/form/flat/form cycle is played out as a conversation with the cloth, responding to the flow and tendencies of each textile.

The central proposition is that the flat-form-flat cycle provides a channel to engage in the transformative performance of dress, while enacting a use practice that diverges from problematic consumption models. In doing this, a unique surface pattern is inscribed on the cloth. The process asks: 'what might be allowed to develop?' The outcome demonstrates a collection of nine textile 'pelts' with documented progression; liminal pieces that are detailed artefacts in themselves, yet invite further interaction.

Key Words:

Textile Design, Speculative, Zero-waste, Shapeshift, Fashion, Skin, Transformation, Performance.







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